



**FV303-CS1**

**April 2004**

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs**

**Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service**

**Washington, DC  
20250**

# **Commodity Specification**

## **Frozen Vegetables**



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**I. General****A. U.S. Standards**

Frozen Vegetables (product/commodity) produced under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Vegetables (U.S. Standards) effective on the date of the Invitation for Offers to Sell (Invitation). The U.S. Standards are published separately (7 C.F. R. Part 52) and are incorporated herein and made a part of this Commodity Specification.

**B. Exceptions to U.S. Standards**

Exceptions to the U.S. Standards for the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Frozen Vegetables purchases are found in Section II, Individual Product Specifications, of this document. Additional exceptions may be specified in the applicable Invitation. Any exceptions contained in the applicable Invitation shall have precedence over the requirements contained herein, for that Invitation only.

**C. Product Origin**

1. Commodities delivered pursuant to this Commodity Specification shall have originated from crops that have been 100% grown, processed, and packed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, (hereinafter referred to as the United States). See Section I.F. of Announcement FV-303.
2. If the contractor handles any commodity originating from sources other than the United States, the contractor must have a written plan to segregate the commodity. This segregation plan will include an identification and record system for all commodities to ensure they are completely segregated and cannot be used to fulfill contracts awarded by USDA. Such segregation plan must be made available to representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
3. The contractor must maintain positive written documentation records evidencing 100 percent domestic origin, to the grower level. Contractors must also ensure that the documentation provided by any sub-contractors demonstrates the same level of traceability. The burden of proof of compliance is on the contractor.

Documentation may include load or warehouse storage receipts for raw product (i.e., bin tags), product blend (formulation) records, product coding explanations, finished product warehousing records, shipping or payment records, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin.

4. Contractors must provide the domestic origin certification and supporting documentation records to representatives of the AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Processed Products Branch, (USDA Grader) when requesting

inspection service. USDA graders will select and review at least one code for each contract to determine compliance with the Agency's domestic origin requirements.

5. Such records must be available for review by the Government in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1. In the event of an audit, AMS auditors will examine as many codes as is necessary to verify compliance.
6. Self-certifications by contractors and sub-contractors will not be accepted.
7. Failure to observe this requirement may lead to suspension or debarment, contract termination, and penalties at Title 18, Section 1001 of the U.S. Code concerning falsification of information.

**D. Manufacturing Practices**

- 1) Good Manufacturing Practices

All frozen vegetables must be produced in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's Good Manufacturing Practices.

- 2) Plant Survey or Plant Systems Audit (PSA)

Successful bidders are required to undergo an annual plant survey or PSA.

The primary purpose of conducting a plant survey or PSA is to ensure that the contractor produces products in a clean, sanitary environment. Contracts are required to maintain process operations records that are sufficiently detailed as to allow AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, PPB to determine past and current sanitation practices.

The AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, PPB will conduct the plant surveys/PSA. PPB personnel will follow the procedures found in the most current version of PPB File Code 159-A-1, Plant Sanitation or the most current procedure for PSA. Contractors must provide the Contracting Office with a copy of an acceptable completed plant survey/PSA. An acceptable plant survey/PSA will be valid for one year.

Contractors who have a PPB inspector in-plant through a contract service agreement will be considered to have met the plant survey/PSA requirement, since a plant survey/PSA is a prerequisite to a contract service agreement. Similarly, contractors who have a completed an acceptable PPB plant survey/PSA for any other purpose within one year of the award will also be deemed to have satisfied this requirement.

Completion of the plant survey/PSA prior to the submission of a bid is suggested, but not required. If a firm submitting a bid receives an award, and has not had a plant survey/PSA within the past year, it must provide proof of an acceptable plant survey/PSA not later than 10 business days from the date of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

**E. Packing Season**

All Frozen Vegetables must be from the current packing season/crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Invitation.

**F. Grade of Frozen Vegetables**

All Frozen Vegetables must be U.S. Grade A (as defined in the U. S. Standards) unless otherwise specified in Section II, Individual Product Specifications, herein or the applicable Invitation.

**G. Fill of Container**

1. Contractor must meet the net weight for the product as specified in the applicable U.S. Standards unless otherwise indicated herein.
  - a. Shipping cases for frozen product shall contain twelve 2 ½-pounds, six 5-pounds, or one 30-pound bulk container.
2. The average net weight must meet the net weight as printed on the label.

**H. Packing, Labels and Packaging****1. USDA Packaging and Labeling****A. Primary Containers**

1. Frozen product must be packed in primary containers of food grade quality in accordance with the Food Additives Regulations of the Federal Food and Drug Administration containing five, or thirty pounds of each product.
2. All containers must be completely sealed (tack sealing is not acceptable);
3. However, 30-pound polyethylene containers closed with a tying device or folded in a commercially acceptable manner are acceptable.
4. Kraft paper containers without polyethylene liners are not acceptable.
5. All products must be packed in new, commercially acceptable primary containers. Frozen Vegetables shall be packed only in the container size and type specified in the applicable Invitation.

The primary containers must be suitably code marked so that the product can be identified with related inspection certificates.

**B. Secondary Containers**

1. The construction of shipping cases shall be adequate to withstand normal refrigerated shipping and cold storage and shall meet one of the following requirements:

- a. Corrugated fiberboard construction, rated at a minimum of 275 pounds per square inch bursting strength, or
  - b. Shipping cases for product packed in paperboard containers shall be of corrugated fiberboard construction, rated at a minimum of 200 pounds per square inch bursting strength.
2. Cases must be marked in such a manner that they contain all of the symbols, statements and information contained in Exhibit 2, "Required Markings for Shipping Containers".

Cases may be marked by printing or stenciling or by preprinted (with **BLACK INK**), self-adhesive stickers. Self-adhesive stickers must be affixed to the case in such a manner that they cannot be removed intact.

Exact arrangement and adherence to font size is not required. The case markings must be clearly marked, easily read, and substantially the same as specified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 3 shows an alternative placard that may be applied to a new, corrugated fiberboard case acceptable by common or other carriers for safe transportation to destinations. This placard must be affixed to the case in such a manner that they cannot be removed intact.

Cases must have the recycling statement shown in Exhibit 5, "Please Recycle" Symbol and Statement or Exhibit 6, "Corrugated Recycles" Symbol and Statement.

3. Shipping cases may be sealed by plastic tape in lieu of glue. The tape must be sufficient width and strength that is used commercially to be acceptable by common carriers for safe transportation to destinations. The tape must extend down the sides or ends at least two inches. A tape of the see-through type shall be used.
4. The net weight must be expressed in metric as well as avoirdupois units.
5. The containers, labels, cases, and case markings must meet the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) except that the Flap (b) section Table VI-Rigid and Semirigid Containers – Defects – Flap (b) is waived provided that the flap gap does not exceed 1 inch and the flaps are fully glued.

## 2. Commercial Packaging and Labeling

•Manufacturer's own commercially packaged and labeled product is acceptable, as long as it meets all of the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration and contains an identification code that allows for traceability of the product.

•All other commercially acceptable containers will comply with the marking requirements of that Announcement.

•Distributor's "brand" labels are not acceptable.

- Intermingling of labeling methods will not be acceptable within a shipping unit (truck load).
- Commercial and USDA labels may not be mingled within a shipping unit (truck load).
- Two or more different commercial labels are not allowed within a shipping unit (truck load).
- The manufacturer must establish a product identification coding system and record system that clearly links product by place and date of manufacture to specific USDA contracts and destinations.
- The required product identification and record system, including codes, must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate to that Announcement USDA Inspection Branch. The USDA Grader will include the product identification codes on the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Grading Certificate.
- The product identification codes for traceability must be placed in a visible location on all primary containers in such a manner that it may not be removed.

#### **I. Universal Product Codes (UPC)**

**USDA labeled packaging and shipping containers:** Primary label and shipping container Universal Product Codes for USDA products are listed in Exhibit 4. The Contractor's UPC is not acceptable. The primary container UPC must be positioned on the label as shown in Exhibit 1. The shipping container UPC must be marked on the case as shown in Exhibit 2.

**Commercially labeled packages and shipping containers** must be labeled in accordance with the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration and contain an identification code that allows for traceability of the product.

#### **J. Palletization Requirements**

##### **1. Pallets**

Products must be on 48 X 40 inch, non-reversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. New pallets must be good quality wood. Used pallets must be No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood. If pallet exchange is desired, the contractor shall arrange for pallet exchange with consignees. USDA is in no way responsible for arrangement of pallet exchange.

##### **2. Unitization**

Each delivery unit of frozen vegetables must be unitized. Shipping cases must be stacked and secured from top to bottom, so that each container and layer of containers becomes an integral part of the pallet. Either stretch wrapping with plastic film or "lock" 'n pop" is acceptable.

**II. Individual Commodity Specifications**

**A. Frozen, Whole Kernel Corn**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade B or better.
2. Color Type: Golden.
3. Variety: Frozen Supersweet Whole Kernel Corn may be used as long as it follows the guidelines in attachment No. 1, as well as this Announcement.

**B. Frozen, Peas**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade B or better, with no additives except salt acquired during processing.

**C. Frozen, Green Beans**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade B or better, except shall be U.S. Grade A for extraneous vegetable material.
  - a. Type: Round.
  - b. Color: Green.
  - c. Styles: Whole, cut (sliced lengthwise, or French style), provided that cut style units must be one inch in length or longer.

NOTE: Compliance with “cut” style one inch or longer provisions will be determined using the criteria in 7 CFR Part 52.2323 of the United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Green and Wax Beans”, except to change the definition of a minor defect in Table I for “cut” style to read: “Piece shorter than ¾ inch in length.”

**D. Frozen, Mixed Vegetables**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade B or better.
2. Proportions of Ingredients:
  - (a) Not more than 40 percent by weight carrots (diced style 3/8 to ½ inch cube).
  - (b) Not more than 40 percent by weight corn (sweet, golden or yellow, whole kernel corn).
  - (c) Not more than 40 percent by weight green peas.

**E. Frozen, Asparagus****A. Spears, Cuts & Tips**

1. Grade - U.S. Grade A.
2. Sizes (Diameter) of spears and tips – medium size or No. 2 classification 3/8 inch to 3/8 to 5/8 inch.
3. Length of cut – 1 inch,  $\pm$  1/4 inch.
4. Net Weight:
  - a. 30 pounds per case (6/5).
  - b. 30 pounds per case (12/2.5 lb.).

**B. Whole Spears**

1. Grade - U.S. Grade A.
2. Whole Spears
3. Net Weight: 15 pounds per case (6/2.5 lb.).

**F. Frozen, Carrots**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade A.
2. Style: Sliced/Crinkle.

**G. Frozen, Corn-on-the-cob**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade A (or U.S. Fancy).
2. Length: Short.
3. Color: Golden (or yellow).
4. Style: Trimmed.
5. Flavor and Odor: Good flavor and odor.
6. Unit Size: 1,320.
7. Pack Size: 96 ears per case.

**H. Frozen, Mashed Sweet Potatoes**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade A.
2. Style: Mashed.
3. Net Weight: 30 pounds (6/5 lb. bags).

**I. Frozen, Random Cut Sweet Potatoes**

1. Grade: U.S. Grade A.
2. Style: Cut.
3. Net Weight: 30 pounds (6/5 lb. bags).

### III. Inspection and Checkloading

#### A. Requirements

Representatives of the AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Processed Products Branch (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection and checkloading required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1. **The cost of inspection, samples taken for inspection, mailing of review samples submitted for evaluation, and any chemical analysis required for testing shall be for the account of the Contractor.**

Inspection of frozen products must be performed not more than 60 days prior to shipment. Whether each lot offered meets the product and container requirements of the contract must be determined on the basis of representative sample units. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Frozen Vegetables and Related Products (7 C.F.R. Part 52), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. Part 42.140), effective on the date of the Invitation.

#### B. Certification

Subject to Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1, the acceptability of the quality, weight, packaging, and checkloading of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader.

No product shall be shipped unless the USDA Grader informs the Contractor that a designated lot is acceptable. Notice by the USDA Grader that a designated lot scheduled for shipment does not meet requirements of the contract shall constitute rejection of such lot.

#### C. Procedures

The Contractor must give the USDA Grader at least 7 days advance notice when scheduling inspection service. Prior to sampling, the Contractor must furnish the USDA Grader with a list of codes and the approximate number of cases per code.

### IV. Failure to Meet Specifications

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot of frozen vegetables fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may, at its option, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the contract price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.

  
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Suzanne Rigby  
Chief, Commodity Procurement Branch  
Fruit and Vegetable Programs  
Agricultural Marketing Service

V. Exhibits

Exhibit 1  
Required Markings for Shipping Containers  
ALL PRINTING TO BE IN BLACK INK

<u>BOTH SIDE PANELS</u>	<u>BOTH END PANELS</u>
PRODUCT NAME 1/ 2/	PRODUCT NAME CONTRACT NO. 3/ PACKED IN 4/ BY 5/
USDA SYMBOL                      6/	
DISTRIBUTED BY USDA IN COOPERATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL OR TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS FOR DOMESTIC FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	
NOT TO BE SOLD OR EXCHANGED STORE IN FREEZER KEEP FROZEN AT 0° or LOWER	

Product name must be printed or stenciled on a separate line in letters at least three-fourths inch high, and all other information must be in letters less than three-fourths inch but at least three-eighths inch high. The USDA Food Symbol must be printed, stamped, or labeled and be of sufficient size to stand out prominently. Case markings must be limited to case codes and those contained in this Exhibit.

- 1/ Insert any additional product style, pack, packing media, or further definition as applicable; (i.e. Yellow, Cut, Chopped, etc.).
- 2/ Insert the size and number of packages per case, i.e. 6 /No. 10 cans, 6/5 pound bags, 12/46 ounce cans, 1/25 pound bag.
- 3/ Insert the last five digits of contract number.
- 4/ Insert month and year packed (The first month of packing season is acceptable).
- 5/ Insert name of Packer and Packer's Address - City, State, and Zip Code. This information can be placed on the end panels or the side panels.
- 6/ Insert Universal Product Code (see Exhibit "4").
- 7/ Vendors who have proper certification are encouraged to place the universally recognized Kosher symbol here.

Exhibit 2  
Alternative Label for Shipping Containers  
(Includes all Required Information)



**Product Name**

**Style**

**Size/Number per case**

**Contract Number xxxxxxxxx**

**Packed in: Month Year**

**Packed by: ABC Growers**

**Any Town, CA 99999**

**DISTRIBUTED BY USDA IN COOPERATION  
WITH STATE AND LOCAL OR TRIBAL  
GOVERNMENTS FOR DOMESTIC FOOD  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**NOT TO BE SOLD OR EXCHANGED**

**STORE IN FREEZER AT 0° F, or BELOW**



1234567891012345678910

Exhibit 3  
Sample Alternative Label for Shipping Containers



# Frozen Sweet Potatoes

Random Cut

6/5 pound bags

Contract Number 120292000

Packed in: November 1999

Packed by: ABC Growers

Any Town, CA 99999

**DISTRIBUTED BY USDA IN COOPERATION  
WITH STATE AND LOCAL OR TRIBAL  
GOVERNMENTS FOR DOMESTIC FOOD  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**NOT TO BE SOLD OR EXCHANGED  
STORE IN FREEZER AT 0° F, or BELOW**



1 07 15001 0225 8

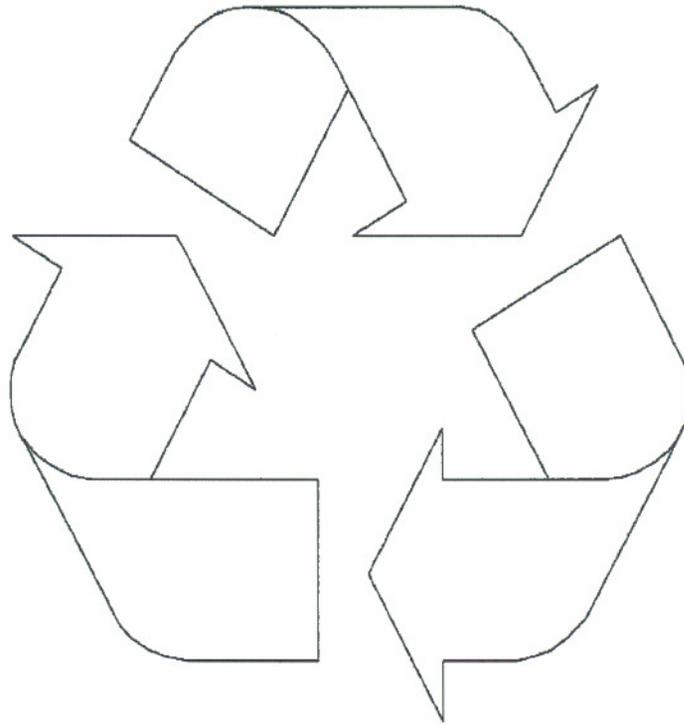
## Exhibit 4

## Universal Product Codes

<u>Frozen Vegetables</u>	<u>Primary Container</u>	<u>Secondary Container</u>
Asparagus, Whole Spears (6/2.5 lb.)	7 15001010538	1 07 15001 01131 9
Asparagus (6/5 lb.)		1 07 15001 01131 9
Asparagus (12/2.5 lb.)		1 07 15001 01054 1
Carrots (30 lb.)		1 07 15001 01099 2
Corn (30 lb.)		1 07 15001 01130 2
Corn-on-the-Cob (96 ears per case)		1 07 15001 01129 6
Green Beans (30 lb.)		1 07 15001 01070 1
Mixed Vegetables (30 lb.)		1 07 15001 01055 8
Peas (30 lb.)		1 07 15001 01160 9
Mashed Sweetpotatoes (6/5 lb. bags)	7 1500101225 8	1 07 15001 01225 5
Random Cut Sweetpotatoes (6/5 lb. bags)	7 1500101224 1	1 07 15001 01224 8

Exhibit 5

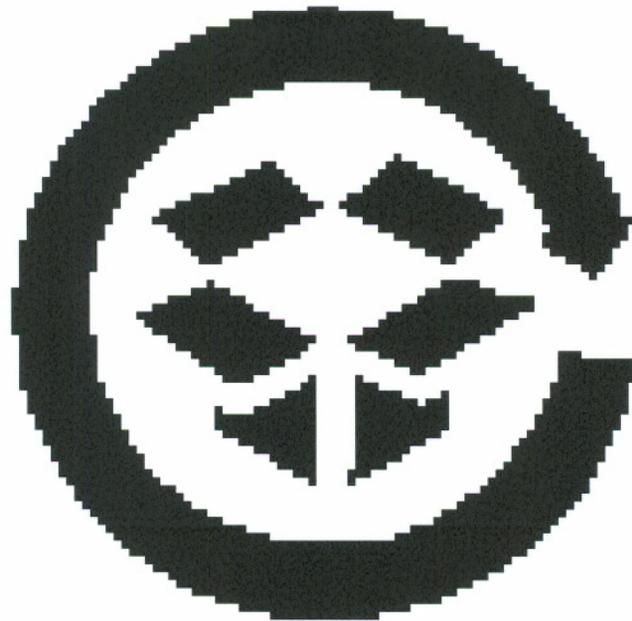
**“Please Recycle” Symbol and Statement**



**PLEASE  
RECYCLE**

Exhibit 6

**“Corrugated Recycles” Symbol and Statement**



**Corrugated  
Recycles**

Exhibit 7

USDA Symbol

